3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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164 DISEASE AND THE CURE OF DISEASE:—The Mandans were as a rule a very healthy people and their catalogue of diseases was small, being mostly those which of necessity accompany a life of considerable hardship. Catarrhal troubles, snow blindness, rheumatism and hemoptisis were most common. They had no fevers and no consumption; venereal diseases were found, but the Mandans always claimed that these were got from the Crows. Their other troubles were wounds, snake bites and freezing. Maximilian said that he also found cases of the gout among them.

• 757 Colds and catarrhal troubles and rheumatism were treated in the vapor bath which is found in one form or another among most Indian tribes. The patient was steamed well and then immediately plunged into icy water or snow, from there he went into the house where he was kept wrapped up for some time. The snow blindness was treated by gentle sweating. Cataracts and inflammation of the eyes resulted from snow blindness at times, and the inflammation was treated by rubbing with some herb which had a rough surface. With this the eyeball was rubbed till blood flowed. Bleeding was practiced, and rattle-snake rattles were considered to be a remedy for almost anything. The rattles were powdered fine, mixed with water or saliva and either swallowed or rubbed on the parts affected. The Mandans used no emetics but had a number of vegetable purgatives. Lewis and Clarke described a root which was chewed and placed on a snake bite, they called it Sacka-comah but it has not been identified botanically. Freezing was treated by rubbing with snow. Horses were sometimes given a piece of wasp's nest as a diuretic.

752 Wounds healed with remarkable rapidity and had very little care. Severe cuts were rubbed with fat and sometimes bound up. A number of cases were known where persons who had been scalped recovered. In arrow wounds the point was always forced entirely through the flesh if possible because it came out more easily so.

524 GAMES:—The Mandans had games for men, women and children, and in most of these betting was an important part of the sport. Probably the best known of these games was

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in the same manner as the Manitari chief, Kokoahkis, mentioned by Say. He went, one evening, wrapped up in his robe, into a hut of the hostile Arikkaras as the young men of the village often do, ate with his face covered, so that he was taken for a young Arikkara; then laid himself down by the side of a woman, and afterwards cut off a lock of her hair, with which he retired. He might have killed the woman, as Kokoahkis did, but refrained from doing so.

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Wounds appear to be healed with remarkable ease. In cases of arrow wounds, they like to force the arrow quite through, that the iron head may not remain in the wound. Men and women are often scalped, in battle, who afterwards come to themselves, and are cured. Such a large wound on the head is rubbed with fat; the medicine man fumigates it, singing at the same time. Disorders are not uncommon among the Indians. The Mandans and Manitaries often suffer from diseases in the eyes; many are one-eyed, or have a tunicle over one eye. In inflammation of the eye they have a custom of scratching the inner eye with the leaf of a kind of grass, resembling a saw, which causes them to bleed very much, and this may often occasion the loss of the eye. Rheumatism, coughs, and the like, are frequent, because they go half naked in the severest cold, and plunge into ice water. Much benefit is often derived from their steam-baths, in a well closed hut, where a thick steam is produced by pouring water on hot stones. They then immediately go into the cold, roll themselves in the snow, or plunge into a river covered with drifting ice, but do not return to a warm hut, as the Russians do. Many Indians are said to have died on the spot by trying this remedy. Some suffer from gout; but all who survive these violent remedies are stronger and more hardy. Another remedy is trampling on the whole body, especially the stomach, as is practised also among the Brazilians. This operation is performed with such violence, as often to occasion hard swellings in the intestines, or ulcers, especially in the liver. The steam-bath is used as a remedy in all kinds of disorders. Vaccination, the application of which met with no difficulties among several nations on the great lakes, especially the Chippeways, is not yet practised among the Mandans and Manitaries. Spitting of blood is said to be frequent, but not pulmonary consumption. Gonorrhœa is very common; they affirm that all venereal disorders came to them from the Crows beyond the Rocky Mountains. For such disorders they often seat themselves over a heated pot, but very frequently burn themselves. They cut open buboes, lengthwise, with a knife, and then run for a couple of miles as fast as they can. The jaundice is said not to occur among them. It appears that they are not acquainted with emetics, but, if they feel anything wrong in the stomach, they thrust a feather down the throat, and thus produce vomiting. Their purgatives are obtained from the vegetable kingdom. The poison-vine often produces swellings, especially in children. As rattlesnakes are rare in the vicinity of the villages, it is, of course, seldom that any one is bitten by them; these Indians are said, however, to have very good remedies against the bite. Frozen limbs are rubbed with snow.

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757 When blindness arises from the dazzling brightness of the snow, which it very frequently does in March, they bathe the eyes with a solution of gunpowder in water. They often have recourse to bleeding, which they perform with a sharp flint, or a knife. They often apply to the Whites for medicine, and willingly follow their prescriptions. These Indians have also various remedies for their horses; thus, when a horse has the strangury, they give it a piece of a wasp's nest.

764 When a Mandan or Manitari dies, they do not let the corpse remain long in the village; but convey it to the distance of 200 paces, and lay it on a narrow stage, about six feet long, resting on four stakes about ten feet high, the body being first laced up in buffalo robes and a blanket. The face, painted red, is turned towards the east. A number of such stages are seen about their villages, and, although they themselves say that this custom is injurious to the health of the villages, they do not renounce it. On many of these stages there are small boxes, containing the bodies of children wrapped in cloth or skins. Ravens are usually seen sitting on these stages, and the Indians dislike that bird, because it feeds on the flesh of their relations. If you ask a Mandan why they do not deposit their dead in the ground, he answers—"The lord of life has, indeed, told us that we came from the ground, and should return to it again;" yet we have lately begun to lay the bodies of the dead on stages, because we love them, and would weep at the sight of them. They believe that every person has several spirits dwelling in him; one of these spirits is black, another brown, and another light-coloured, the latter of which alone returns to the lord of life. They think that after death they go to the south, to several villages which are often visited by the gods; that the brave and most eminent go to the village of the good, but the wicked into a different one: that they there live in the same manner as they do here, carry on the same occupations, eat the same food, have wives, and enjoy the pleasures of the chase and war. Those who are kind-hearted are supposed to make many presents and do good, find everything in abundance, and their existence there is dependant on their course of life while in the world. Some of the inhabitants of the Mandan villages are said not to believe all these particulars, and suppose that after death they will live in the sun or in a certain star.

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765 They mourn for the dead a whole year; cut off their hair, cover their body and head with white or grey clay, and often, with a knife or sharp flint, make incisions in their arms and legs in parallel lines, in their whole length, so that they are covered with blood. For some days after death the relations make a loud lament and bewailing. Often a relative, or some other friend, covers the dead, as they express it: he brings one or two woollen cloths, of a red, blue, white, or green colour, and, as soon as the body is laid on the stage, mounts upon the scaffolding, and conceals the body beneath the covering. A friend who will do this is, in token of respect, presented, by the family of the deceased, with a horse. If it is known beforehand that a person intends doing this honour to the dead, a horse is at once tied near the stage, and the friend, having per-

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plunge into and swim across the wildest streams and rivers, at times when they have no canoes or craft in which to cross them. I have as yet seen no tribe where this art is neglected. It is learned at a very early age by both sexes, and enables the strong and hardy muscles of the squaws to take their child upon the back, and successfully to pass any river that lies in their way.

The mode of swimming amongst the Mandans, as well as amongst most of the other tribes, is quite different from that practiced in those parts of the civilized world, which I have had the pleasure yet to visit. The Indian, instead of parting his hands simultaneously under the chin, and making the stroke outward, in a horizontal direction, causing thereby a serious strain upon the chest, throws his body alternately upon the left and the right side, raising one arm entirely above the water and reaching as far forward as he can, to dip it, whilst his whole weight and force are spent upon the one that is passing under him, and like a paddle propelling him along; whilst this arm is making a half circle, and is being raised out of the water behind him, the opposite arm is describing a similar arcl. in the air over his head, to be dipped in the water as far as he can reach before him, with the hand turned under, forming a sort of bucket, to act most effectively as it passes in its turn underneath him.

By this bold and powerful mode of swimming, which may want the grace that many would wish to see, I am quite sure, from the experience I have had, that much of the fatigue and strain upon the breast and spine are avoided, and that a man will preserve his strength and his breath much longer in this alternate and rolling motion, than he can in the usual mode of swimming, in the polished world.

In addition to the modes of bathing which I have above described, the Mandans have another, which is a much greater luxury, and often resorted to by the sick, but far more often by the well and sound, as a matter of luxury only, or perhaps for the purpose of hardening their limbs and preparing them for the thousand exposures and vicissitudes of life to which they are continually liable. I allude to their vapour baths, or *sudatories*, of which each village has several, and which seem to be a kind of public property—accessible to all, and resorted to by all, male and female, old and young, sick and well.

In every Mandan lodge is to be seen a crib or basket, much in the shape of a bathing-tub, curiously woven with willow boughs, and sufficiently large to receive any person of the family in a reclining or recumbent posture; which, when any one is to take a bath, is carried by the squaw to the sudatory for the purpose, and brought back to the wigwam again after it has been used

These sudatories are always near the village, above or below it, on the bank of the river. They are generally built of skins (in form of a Crow or Sioux lodge which I have before described), covered with buffalo skins

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sewed tight together, with a kind of furnace in the centre; or in other words, in the centre of the lodge are two walls of stone about six feet long and two and a half apart, and about three feet high; across and over this space, between the two walls, are laid a number of round sticks, on which the bathing crib is placed (vide PLATE 71). Contiguous to the lodge, and outside of it, is a little furnace something similar, in the side of the bank, where the woman kindles a hot fire, and heats to a red heat a number of large stones, which are kept at these places for this particular purpose; and having them all in readiness, she goes home or sends word to inform her husband or other one who is waiting, that all is ready; when he makes his appearance entirely naked, though with a large buffalo robe wrapped around him. He then enters the lodge and places himself in the crib or basket, either on his back or in a sitting posture (the latter of which is generally preferred), with his back towards the door of the lodge; when the squaw brings in a large stone red hot, between two sticks (lashed together somewhat in the form of a pair of tongs) and, placing it under him, throws cold water upon it, which raises a profusion of vapour about him. He is at once enveloped in a cloud of steam, and a woman or child will sit at a little distance and continue to dash water upon the stone, whilst the matron of the lodge is out, and preparing to make her appearance with another heated stone: or he will sit and dip from a wooden bowl, with a ladle made of the mountain-sheep's horn, and throw upon the heated stones, with his own hands, the water which he is drawing through his lungs and pores, in the next moment, in the most delectable and exhilarating vapours, as it distils through the mat of wild sage and other medicinal and aromatic herbs, which he has strewed over the bottom of his basket, and on which he reclines.

During all this time the lodge is shut perfectly tight, and he quaffs this delicious and renovating draught to his lungs with deep drawn sighs, and with extended nostrils, until he is drenched in the most profuse degree of perspiration that can be produced; when he makes a kind of strangled signal, at which the lodge is opened, and he darts forth with the speed of a frightened deer, and plunges headlong into the river, from which he instantly escapes again, wraps his robe around him and "leans" as fast as possible for home. Here his limbs are wiped dry, and wrapped close and tight within the fur of the buffalo robes, in which he takes his nap, with his feet to the fire; then oils his limbs and hair with bear's grease, dresses and plumes himself for a visit—a feast—a parade, or a council; or slicks down his long hair, and rubs his oiled limbs to a polish, with a piece of soft buckskin, prepared to join in games of ball or Tchung-kee.

Such is the sudatory or the vapour bath of the Mandans, and, as I before observed, it is resorted to both as an every-day luxury by those who have the time and energy or industry to indulge in it; and also used by the sick as a remedy for nearly all the diseases which are known amongst them.

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Fevers are very rare, and in fact almost unknown amongst these people: but in the few cases of fever which have been known, this treatment has been applied, and without the fatal consequences which we would naturally predict. The greater part of their diseases are inflammatory rheumatisms, and other chronic diseases; and for these, this mode of treatment, with their modes of life, does admirably well. This custom is similar amongst nearly all of these Missouri Indians, and amongst the Pawnees, Omahas, and Punchas and other tribes, who have suffered with the small-pox (the dread destroyer of the Indian race), this mode was practiced by the poor creatures, who fled by hundreds to the river's edge, and by hundreds died before they could escape from the waves, into which they had plunged in the heat and rage of a burning fever. Such will yet be the scourge, and such the misery of these poor unthinking people, and each tribe to the Rocky Mountains, as it has been with every tribe between here and the Atlantic Ocean. White men—whiskey—tomahawks—scalping knives—guns, powder and ball—small-pox—debauchery—extermination.

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